

Wildlife and Plant Resource Report Primrose Creek/ Snow River Project Environmental Assessment

**U.S. Forest Service
Chugach National Forest**

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FOSTER WHEELER ENVIRONMENTAL CORPORATION

APPENDIX B
MARBLED MURRELET SURVEY
1996 PRIMROSE/SNOW RIVER
SEWARD RANGER DISTRICT, ALASKA

United States Department of Agriculture	Forest Service	Chugach National Forest	Seward Ranger District P.O. Box 390 Seward, AK 99664
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Reply to: 2600

Date: September 4, 1996

Subject: 1996 Primrose/Snow Marbled Murrelet Survey-Seward Ranger District

To: Files

In 1996 intensive inland monitoring of Marbled Murrelet (*Brachyramphus marmoratus*) usage was conducted in the Snow River and Primrose Valleys as inventory work for the proposed Primrose/Snow River Timber Sale. The majority of birds detected were most likely Marbled Murrelets as the survey areas were at lower elevations (1350 ft and below) and in or near spruce or hemlock stands. Kittlitz's murrelets (*Brachyramphus brevirostris*) are known to nest in alpine areas (Hamer and Nelson, 1995).

Surveys were conducted in blocks 1 and 2 of the Snow River sale and blocks 1 through 4 of the Primrose sale. The survey objective was to determine murrelet presence in the proposed sale area. Survey points in the Snow River sale were located along the Victor Creek Trail and along the railroad right of way. Survey points in the Primrose sale were located in muskegs or near lake edges within or near the proposed unit boundaries. Open locations were desirable to provide observers a clear field of view.

Surveys were conducted using the Murrelet Intensive Inventory (Dawn Watch) Form Guidelines for Alaska (Naslund et al. 1991, Paton et al. 1990). All dawn watches began an hour and a half before official sunrise and continued until 15 minutes after sunrise or 15 minutes after the last bird was detected.

Twenty-seven points were surveyed between July 9th and July 30th with 331 detections resulting in a total of 569 birds. Table 1 summarizes locations, behavior of birds, and number of detections for sites surveyed in the proposed Snow River and Primrose Timber Sales.

On July 9, 1996 94 detections were made at 3 survey points at Victor Creek. Site V1 (the powerline crossing on the Victor Creek Trail) was resurveyed on two other occasions as a control point and as a training point. High numbers of detections occurred at this location on all 3 occasions. The birds seem to be concentrating and flying low up the Victor Creek drainage. Birds may be circling in this area which could account for high numbers of detections and indicate nesting. The birds also seemed to disperse as they traveled higher up the drainage accounting for a lower number of detections at site V3 and further indicating nesting in the area. The Victor Creek drainage would be an excellent area for future training and further study including nest searching.

Only 8 detections occurred at 9 sites in the Snow River Valley, however all of these points were at the same elevation (approximately 450 ft ASL). It is possible that the birds flying up Victor Creek may be coming through Snow River Valley at a higher elevation than the points surveyed, or be flying silently and dispersed. This would account for the high numbers of detections at Victor Creek and very low numbers of detections in Snow River Valley just south of there. Future surveys could include the Ptarmagin Creek drainage to determine if some of the murrelets detected at Victor Creek are flying further north to this area, and areas in the Snow River Valley at elevations higher than previously surveyed. The area above Snow River Valley is steep and there are few suitable open areas at elevations a few hundred feet above the valley which would make future surveys here difficult.

No birds were detected in the Paradise Lakes area, surveyed to determine if Victor Creek birds were coming from Prince William Sound.

The Primrose (P1-3) and Long Lake Sites (L1-3) recorded a total of 11 detections at 6 sites. These numbers were consistently lower than the Meridian (M1-4), Grayling (G1-2), and Ski Lake (K1-2) sites located further south. The 8 sites in these areas accounted for a total of 166 detections on 8 sampling occasions. These sites were surveyed as pairs. In each pair the survey point which was located more westerly and at a higher elevation (a difference of a few hundred feet) had a greater number of detections. Birds were detected circling at sites M1, M3, and G2 indicating possible nesting in these areas. Wing sounds and jet sounds were noted at sites M3 and M4 on July 25, 1996. The Meridian and Grayling Lakes area would be an excellent area for further study including nest searching.

Literature Cited

- Hamer, T.E. and S.K. Nelson. 1995. Characteristics of marbled murrelet nest trees and nesting stands. Gen. Tech. Rep. PSW-152. Berkley, CA, Pacific Southwest Research Station, USDA Forest Service. 14 pp.
- Naslund, N.L., K.J. Kuletz, D. Marks, and M. Cody. 1991. Appendix A. Murrelet intensive inventory (dawn watch) form guidelines for Alaska. Anchorage, AK. Migratory Bird Management. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 7 pp.
- Paton, P.W.C., C.J. Ralph, H.R. Carter, and S.K. Nelson. 1990. Surveying marbled murrelets at inland sites: a guide. Gen. Tech. Rep. PSW-120. Berkley, CA, Pacific Southwest Research Station, USDA Forest Service. 9 pp.

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Table 1. Snow River and Primrose Timber Sales - 1996 Matched Murrelet Wawn
Watch Survey - Seward Ranger District

SITE	DATE	LEGAL DESCRIPTION	SALE UNIT NO.	ELEV.	FLY OVER	CIRCLE	CIRCLE BELOW	UNKNOWN	NO. DET	NO. BIRDS
VICTOR CREEK										
V1	7/9/96	T3N,R1E,SEC 18 NE1/4 SEW 8-7	SR-BL1, CG 103 HE1 102	650 FT	24	2	2	0	28	53
V1	7/11/96				59	1	1	1	62	108
V1	7/16/96				16	2	0	0	18	25
V2	7/9/96	T3N,R1E,SEC 18 NE1/4 SEW 8-7	SR-BL1 HE1 102 HE1 104	800 FT	22	2	0	0	24	51
V3	7/9/96	T3N,R1E,SEC 8 SW1/4 SEW 8-7	SR-BL1 HE1 102	1000 FT	11	3	0	0	14	30
SUBTOTAL					132	10	3	1	146	267
SNOW RIVER										
S1	7/10/96	T3N,R1E,SEC 19 SE1/4 SEW 8-7	SR-BL2 NE1 201	500 FT	0	0	0	0	0	0
S2	7/10/96	T3N,R1E,SEC 30 NE1/4 SEW 8-7	SR-BL2 NE1 201	500 FT	1	0	0	0	1	2
S3	7/10/96	T3N,R1E,SEC 30 SE1/4 SEW 8-7	SR-BL2 CG 207 CG 204	500 FT	3	0	0	0	3	5
S4	7/10/96	T3N,R1E,SEC 29 SW1/4 SEW 8-7	SR-BL2 CG 205	475 FT	1	0	0	0	1	1
S5	7/10/96	T3N,R1E,SEC 32 NW1/4 SEW 8-7	SR-BL2 CG 224	475 FT	0	0	0	0	0	0
S6	7/10/96	T3N,R1E,SEC 32 NW1/4 SEW 8-7	SR-BL2 CG 208 CG 225	475 FT	0	0	0	0	0	0
S7	7/10/96	T3N,R1E,SEC 32 SW1/4 SEW 8-7	SR-BL2 CG 210	450 FT	2	0	0	0	2	4
S8	7/10/96	T2N,R1E,SEC 6 NE1/4 SEW 8-7	SR-BL2 CG 210	450 FT	1	0	0	0	1	2
S9	7/10/96	T2N,R1E,SEC 6 SE1/4 SEW 8-7	SR-BL2 CG 210	450 FT	0	0	0	0	0	0
SUBTOTAL					8	0	0	0	8	14
PARADISE LAKES										
R1	7/30/96	T3N,R2E,SEC 15 SE1/4 SEW 8-7		1200 FT	0	0	0	0	0	0
R2	7/30/96	T3N,R2E,SEC 12 NE1/4 SEW 8-7		1350 FT	0	0	0	0	0	0
SUBTOTAL					0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 1. Continued

SITE	DATE	LEGAL DESCRIPTION	SALE UNIT NO.	ELEV.	FLY OVER	CIRCLE	CIRCLE BELOW	UNKNOW	NO. DET	NO. BIRDS
PRIMROSE										
P1	7/17/96	T3M, R1W, SEC 13, SW1/4 SEW B-7	PR-BL1 CG 101 CG 102	700 FT	0	0	0	0	0	0
P2	7/17/96	T3M, R1W, SEC 24, NW1/4 SEW B-7	PR-BL1 CG 101 CG 102	700 FT	4	1	0	0	5	7
P3	7/11/96	T3M, R1W, SEC 24, SW1/4 SEW B-7	PR-BL1&BL2 CG 203	700 FT	1	0	0	0	1	3
SUBTOTAL					5	1	0	0	6	10
LONG LAKE										
L1	7/28/96	T3M, R1W, SEC 25, SW1/4 SEW B-7	PR-BL2 CG 203 CG 204 CG 207	1000 FT	2	0	0	0	2	3
L2	7/27/96	T3M, R1W, SEC 25, SE1/4 SEW B-7	PR-BL2 CG 208 CG 209 CG 210	1100 FT	3	0	0	0	3	3
L3	7/23/96	T3M, R1W, SEC 36, SE1/4 SEW B-7	PR-BL3 CG 303 CG 310 CG 311	750 FT	0	0	0	0	0	0
SUBTOTAL					5	0	0	0	5	6
HERIDIAN LAKE										
M1	7/24/96	T2M, R1W, SEC 1, SE1/4 SEW B-7	PR-BL3 CG 304 CG 305	900 FT	14	1	0	1	16	28
M2	7/24/96	T2M, R1W, SEC 12, NW1/4 SEW B-7	PR-BL3 CG 218 ME1 309	950 FT	30	0	0	0	30	40
M3	7/25/96	T2M, R1W, SEC 12, NE1/4 SEW B-7	PR-BL4 CG 419 CG 420	750 FT	14	3	0	0	17	37
M4	7/25/96	T2M, R1W, SEC 12, SW1/4 SEW B-7	PR-BL4 CG 422 CG 423	1050 FT	40	0	0	0	40	63
SUBTOTAL					98	4	0	1	103	168
GRAYLING LAKE										
G1	7/26/96	T2M, R1W, SEC 13, NE1/4 SEW B-7	PR-BL4 CG 403 CG 414	950 FT	4	0	0	0	4	5
G2	7/26/96	T2M, R1W, SEC 13, NW1/4 SEW B-7	PR-BL4 CG 412 CG 413 CG 415	1000 FT	17	6	0	5	28	57
SUBTOTAL					21	6	0	5	32	62
SKI LAKE										
K1	7/18/96	T3M, R1W, SEC 13, NE1/4 SEW B-7	PR-BL4 CG 408 CG 410	1000 FT	22	0	0	1	23	31
K2	7/18/96	T2M, R1W, SEC 24, NE1/4 SEW B-7	PR-BL4 CG 401	750 FT	8	0	0	0	8	11
SUBTOTAL					30	0	0	1	31	42

Figure 1. Locations of murrelet dawn watch survey points on the Seward Ranger District, Alaska during the 1996 season.

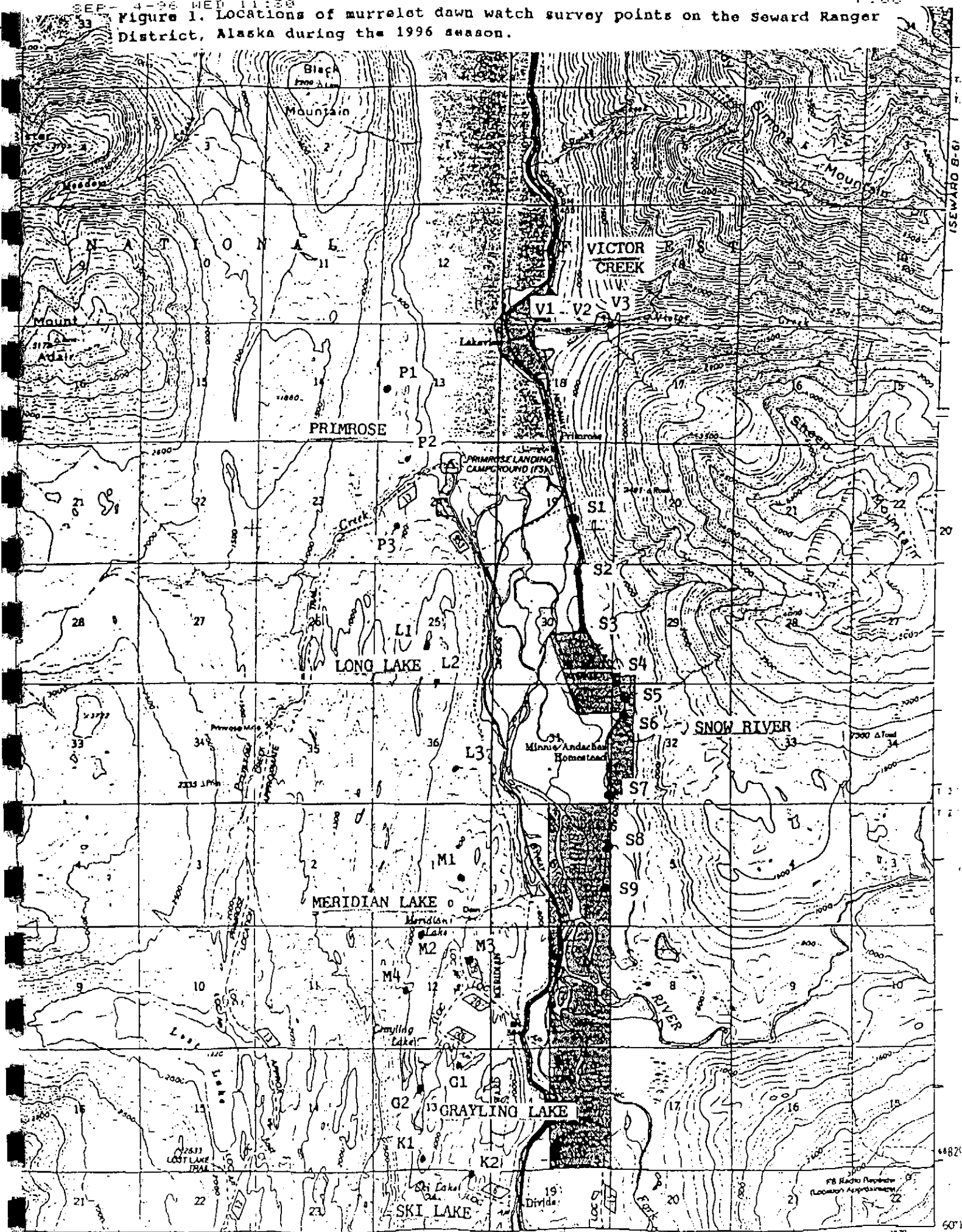


Figure 2. Locations of murrelet dawn watch survey points on the Seward Ranger District, Alaska during the 1996 season.

